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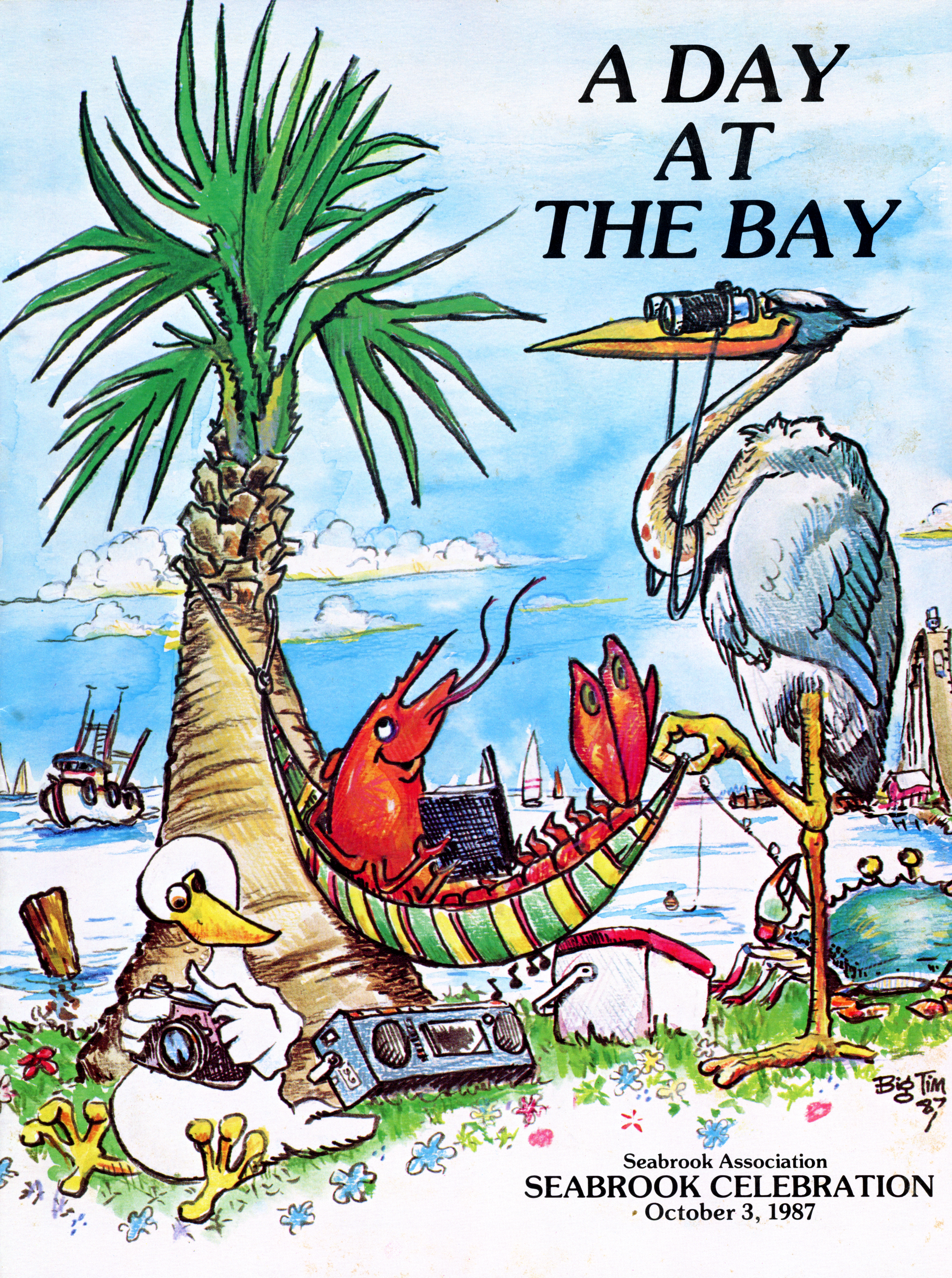

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From the Seabrook Association President:

Welcome to the Seventh Annual Seabrook Celebration, sponsored by the Seabrook Association. We hope this will be a fun-filled day for all of you.

Staging a successful event such as this requires a major commitment of time and energy from many people. I'm very grateful to all those who worked so hard to make this, and each previous Celebration, possible. Members of the Seabrook Association, city officials and employees, the business people and the citizens of Seabrook are to be commended for a job well done. Thank you all for your efforts.

The Seabrook Association is a group of people who feel an obligation to work for the betterment of their community. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at the Lakewood Yacht Club. All interested persons are invited to join us. For additional information contact any of the officers or write to us at the above address.

Sincerely,

Lynn Miller

Lynn Miller
President, Seabrook Association

Lynn Miller, President - 474-4260; Jan Brown, First Vice-President - 474-3471; Jack Fryday, Second Vice-President - 474-4417; Rebbi Casper, Treasurer - 474-7786; Dee Sisson, secretary - 474-3906; Bill Kerber, Immediate Past President - 474-4471

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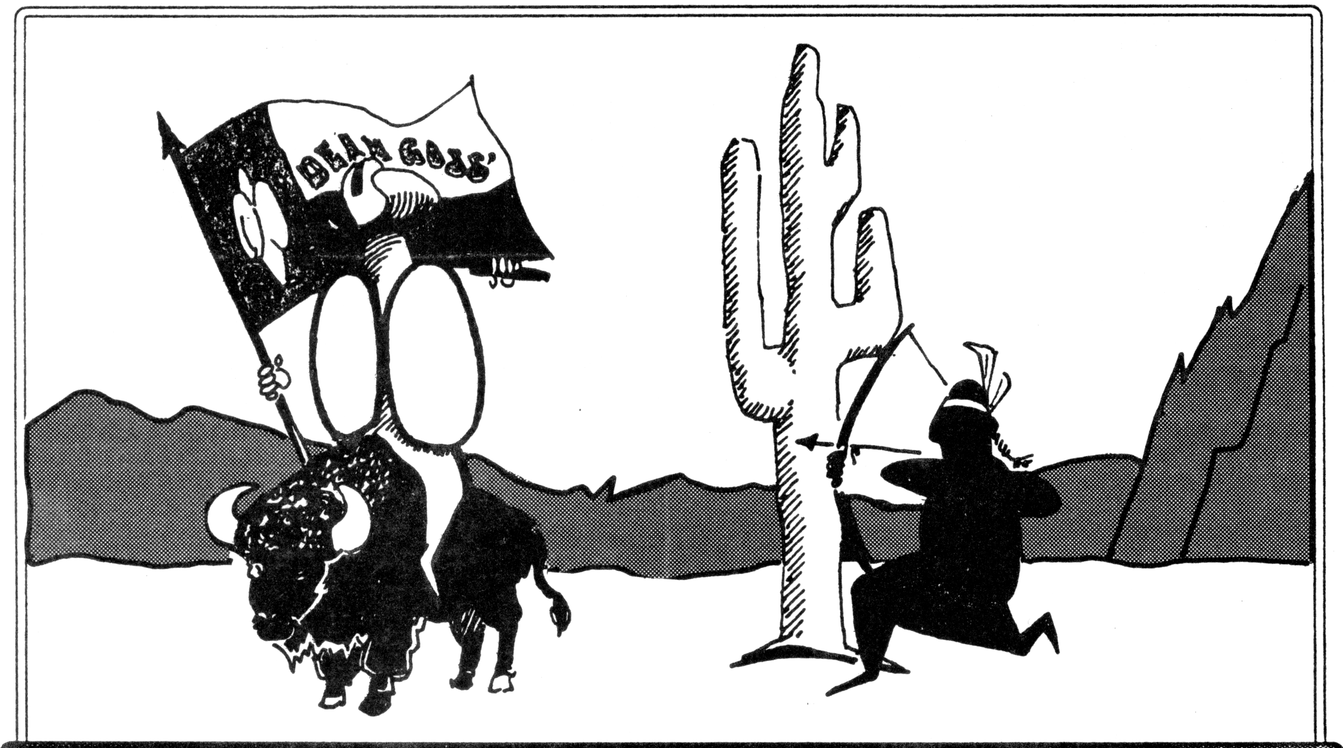

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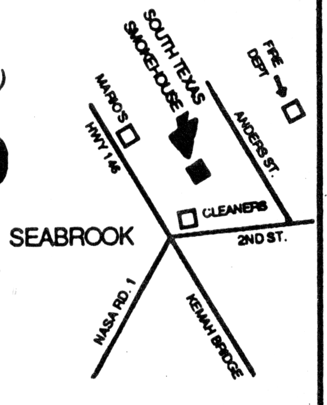
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Seabrook Association

By Lynn Miller

Some years ago, several Seabrook residents viewed with concern the dissidence they felt existed in their town. The businesses, real estate and recreational interests and the fishing industries seemed widely separated, with nothing focused on the common good of Seabrook.

Four area businessmen, Pat McCann, Bob Conner, Rex Meador and Jim Hargrove, joined forces in an attempt to find a solution to this problem. The outcome of their meetings was the formation in 1980 of the Seabrook Association, an organization composed, in their words, of a group of dedicated people — businessmen, boaters, fishermen, residents and friends of Seabrook joined together to organize, develop and implement programs and projects contributing to Seabrook's betterment as *the* place to live, do business, relax and enjoy life.

The association's first president was Pat McCann, and its immediate goals were:

- Join by membership in the association the interests of the residents of Seabrook, the recreational boating fraternity and the business community.
- Develop community and cultural projects jointly, utilizing the greater capacity of an associated effort representing the total community.
- Work in cooperation with other community organizations in and outside Seabrook in the development of area projects, both civic and cultural.
- Function as a non-political organization working in concert with local civic groups and city government in "beautification"and improvement projects within the city.

According to Bob Conner, another local resident who was instrumental in making the organization "go" was Lois Mohrhusen. She became involved with the association's first project — the purchase of Christmas decorations for the city. Approximately $15,000 was raised to fund this project. Secondly, 100 American flags were donated to Seabrook. These are used on special occasions to line the city's streets.

In 1981, Joe Pirtle, Seabrook's mayor, was looking for some means to promote Seabrook and attract people to the area. It was decided to hold a festival to celebrate Seabrook's 20th year as an incorporated city. This first Seabrook Celebration, held on October 17, was sponsored by the city, but members of the Seabrook Association figured prominently in its implementation. Marie Conner served as the parade chairman.

The first Celebration parade contained approximately 100 units. The Mount Carmel High School, Alvin Community College and the Clear Lake High School bands provided music. Many dignitaries, including former mayors of Seabrook,

Seabrook Celebration

Schedule of Events

10 a.m.		Parade
11 a.m. - 6 p.m.	Celebration Site	Food and Games
11 a.m.	Stage	Flag Raising Ceremony National Anthem Salute to the Constitution
11:45 a.m.	Stage	Rosette Twirling Team
12 noon	Stage	Parade Trophy Awards
12:30 p.m.	Stage	Jill Rauscher School of Dance
1 p.m.	Stage	Sante Fe Stompers
1:30 p.m.	Stage	Jazzercize Demonstration — Ed White Youth Center
2 p.m.	Stage	Kung Fu Demonstration — Glenn Wilson's Kung Fu Club
2:30 p.m.	Stage	Clear Lake Dance Centre
4-6 p.m.	Stage	Auction
4:30 p.m.	Stage	Presentation of Awards for Gumbo and Chili Cookoffs

state, county and city officials from other near-by cities were in attendance. The Grand Marshall was astronaut Bob Crippen. Prominently featured in the parade was the Seabrook Association's "Salute to Seabrook" float.

The Seabrook Celebration proved to be a great success and, beginning in 1982, the association took over the sponsorship. With the exception of 1983, when Hurricane Alicia disrupted the lives of practically every resident of the city, it has been an annual event. Through 1984, the Celebration was held on the city hall lawn and the Seabrook community house grounds. By 1985 it had outgrown this space and was moved to the Rex Meador Park on Meyer Road.

A fashion show on the Thursday prior to the Celebration usually kicks off the event, and the parade, organized since 1982 by Emogene Brummerhop, continues to be the highlight of the day. Arts and crafts, food and drink, games and other activities all combine to provide a day of fun for everyone.

Over the past seven years the Seabrook Association has been involved in many worthwhile projects. It was instrumental in developing the second outlet from Clear Lake to Galveston Bay through a Community Development Committee it founded. City beautification has always been a pet project of the association and, through Operation Sparkle, residents and businesses are encouraged to clean up their city. Seabrook's children are involved in this project through a poster contest held at Bay Elementary School. The association has provided playground equipment to Bay Elementary and a lighted scoreboard to Seabrook Intermediate School. It has made significant financial contributions to the Ed White Youth Center, the Evelyn Meador Library and the Fireboat Fund. It has sponsored home and business Christmas decorating contests and has provided Christmas gifts to senior citizens. In 1984, it restored a small shrimp boat to create a permanent parade float, *The Spirit of Seabrook*, which has represented the association and the city in parades around the area.

Each year, at an annual awards banquet, the association honors citizens who have been instrumental in activities that benefit Seabrook. This year, a Citizen of the Year plaque was placed in city hall so these people can be more widely recognized. Past Citizens of the Year include: 1981, Rex Meador; 1982, Emogene Brummerhop and Bob Conner; 1983, Jim Hargrove; 1984, Bill Dickerson; 1985, Kenneth Royal; 1986, Henry Hults; 1987, Lois and Fred Mohrhusen.

In 1983, '84 and '85 respectively, Allen Repsdorph, Joe Pirtle and Sidney Brummerhop were also honored as Distinguished Citizens of the Year.

Past presidents of the Seabrook Association are: 1980, Pat McCann; 1981, Bob Conner; 1982, Jim Hargrove; 1983, Jack Fryday; 1984, Marie Conner; 1985, Rex Whaley; 1986, Bill Kerber.

The Association meets once a month on the third Wednesday at Lakewood Yacht Club. Meetings begin at 11:30 with lunch followed by a timely program and usually end by 1 p.m. Everyone who cares for Seabrook is urged to join.

Members of the Seabrook Association spent many hours during the fall getting the Association's boat float ready for the annual Seabrook Celebration Parade before the float was finally retired in 1986.

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The Early Years Of Seabrook

By Debbie Pomeroy

Long before Ritson Morris brought his family to the western shore of Galveston Bay in 1830 or Seabrook Sydnor set up the Seabrook Townlot and Improvement Company in 1896, the Attakapas, Karankawas and the Cohuiltecan Indian tribes wandered throughout our area. Excavations by state, local and national archeologists have shown that the entire Clear Lake area was occupied for at least 7,000 years before any white man set foot in Texas and that, in fact, the entire perimeter of Clear Lake is one huge Indian site. The Spanish ruled Texas as a colony, dealing with "savages" for 300 years, and the French had been trading with the Indians for 200 years before Ritson Morris got his land grant from the Mexican government on November 14, 1832.

According to archeologists, man first came to Texas over 40,000 years ago, crossing the Bering Land Bridge from Asia into Alaska during the last of the Great Ice Ages and wandering south in subsequent centuries. They searched for food and hunted the now-extinct Columbian elephant, mammouth, mastodon and ancient bison. These Paleo-Americans left little to mark their passage but a few spear points and the great stone heads along the Trinity River.

Then, about 8,000 years ago, the Amerinds (American Indians) discovered the earlier Paleo trail and spread across the land. Of Mongoloid or Asian stock, the "Real Humans", as they called themselves, eventually migrated into Central America to form the agrarian civilizations there.

The coastal region west of Galveston Bay became the habitat of the imposing Karankawa tribes. Standing over six-feet tall, with fine physiques, they pierced their nipples and upper lip with pieces of cane and smeared their bodies with alligator fat. Carrying six-foot long bows and large arrows, they most certainly presented a frightening picture to the early settlers. Their practice of cannibalism, now thought by most to have been strictly for ceremonial purposes, only served to enhance their fierce reputation. Although the Karankawa tribes, along with the Attakapas and Cohuiltecans, roamed the coastal region from Galveston Bay to Corpus Christi Bay, their total population was probably less than a few thousand.

Nomads, always in constant search of food, these tribes did not have permanent shelter or camp sites. They skillfully traveled the rivers and bays in dugout canoes but did not venture far out into the rougher waters of the Gulf. During the winter months they lived on the coast and the islands where the climate was milder and a good food supply, fish, oysters, crabs, and the roots of sea grass, was widely available.

During the summer months they moved inland to hunt the plentiful deer, antelope and buffalo. Numerous large camping sites have been discovered surrounding the Clear Lake area with significant finds containing bodies, artifacts and shells. Short-term camp sites have been identified at Armand Bayou and arrowheads are often turned up during development of the area.

The first reported contact between Texas Indians and Europeans came on November 6, 1528, when Cabeza de Vaca washed up on Galveston Island and was "rescued" by a band of Karankawas. He was their captive for the next eight years. But de Vaca wasn't the last white man to arrive and, in later years, notorious pirate Jean Lafitte would mount an all-out campaign to eradicate the fierce warriors from Galveston. By 1850, Stephen F. Austin's settlers would finally succeed in driving the last remaining tribes of Karankawas to Corpus Christi Bay where they vanished forever, victims of wars with the settlers and European diseases such as smallpox and chicken pox. By 1908, only nine Attakapans were alive and all the other tribes were considered extinct.

But Virginia Morris, daughter of Ritson and Minerva Morris, remembered vividly her close brush with a large group of warriors, most likely Attakapans. She was only five years old when 20 canoes were spotted coming up the bay from the direction of Clear Creek. Her mother, fearing that the Indians were hostile, sent for help and hid Virginia and all the slave children under the beds. Mr. Morris and several slaves arrived quickly only to discover, to their relief, the the Indians were a peaceful hunting party heading up the Trinity River after game. They asked for water and food, which the Morris family provided, and were gone quickly.

Today there are, of course, no fierce warriors to give little children nightmares. And all that is left of their nomadic way of life lies in the shell middens and burial grounds that surround Seabrook. The next time you kick a shell at the bay or dig up an odd-shaped rock in your garden, look closely. You could be getting a glimpse into our past.

Debbi Pomeroy is a columnist for the Houston Chronicle, *author of numerous general interest, travel, history and cooking features for* Texas Weekly, Pasadena Citizen, Houston Chronicle *and others. She is also the author of* San Bernard River Recipes. *Born and reared in Houston, she and her husband David moved to Seabrook two years ago.*

Flash Back

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CONGRATULATIONS SEABROOK

Life In Early Seabrook

By John Ballentine and
Emogene Brummerhop

Following the early settlement of Seabrook under a land grant issued by the Spanish government in 1832, the area had no real identifying name until Seabrook Sydnor established the township of Seabrook in 1895. Although many things have affected the course of Seabrook's history, nothing has been more important than the people who chose the city for their home.

Before Sydnor established the township, however, families with names recognized today led the early settlers. Two of the most prominent families were the Menards and Brenners, and some of the Menard descendants are still in the area today.

Although pieces of paper designate the creation of a town, *people* make the town. Seabrook's list of contributing people is as colorful as the events responsible for the shaping of its history. Shortly after Sydnor established the township, Houston businessmen Ben Taub, Ben Campbell and Sewel Myer purchased the town for a reported sum of approximately $1,600.

Most of the homes built in the area were used as summer residences by such recognizable families as the Ballentines, Brummerhops, Larrabees, Hesters, Chapmans and Palms. Other families taking advantage of the bayfront community were the Currys, Porters, Rodicks, Burns, Olsens and Kellets. Many of these families chose to move to the town on a permanent basis instead of only for the summer months.

During the early 1900s, Second Street served as the town's main road and Houston residents soon began to make round trips using their new-fangled motor cars. In 1900, a hand-drawn ferry was in operation between Seabrook and Kemah on the Clear Creek Channel. It wasn't until 1928 that a bridge was finally built between the two towns. In 1964, a new drawbridge was built and Highway 146 was established as a four-lane highway.

During the early 1900s, the welcome sight of one or two horsemen riding over from Webster meant the mail had arrived. Brothers Sam and Joe Brummerhop were responsible for the daily mail runs. Later a post office was placed in Dick Larrabee's grocery store. The Southern Pacific Railroad brought the mail into town, throwing it off the train at what is now NASA Road One and Highway 146. Someone would run over, pick up and load the mail on a cart then take it to the post office.

In order to provide an education for the children of Seabrook, a two-story school was built on Hardesty Street. Three teachers taught first through seventh grades in four rooms. Eighth-grade students went to the school in Webster by bus. In 1926, 57 students were enrolled in classes. The towns of Seabrook, Kemah, League City and Webster consolidated in 1948 as the Clear Creek Independent School District. At the time, Humble Oil and Refinery Company paid about 90 percent of the school taxes.

As a welcome addition to the town, Mr. and Mrs. George Hamman built and gave to the community the Seabrook Community House for use by the town youth. The house was also used by the school, the church, civic clubs and the Texas State Guard. Both the Kemah and Seabrook schools joined for lunch dur-

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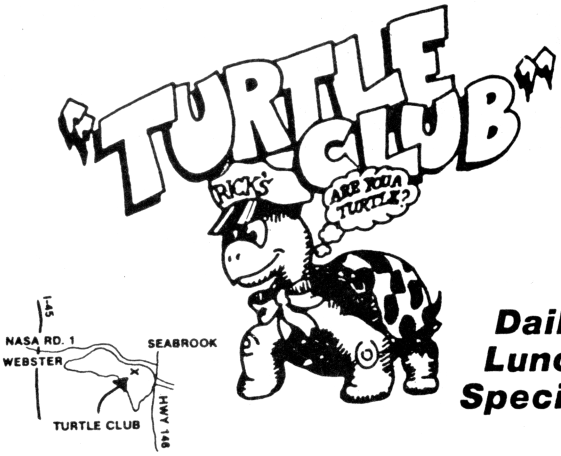

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ing the '40s with government surplus food cooked and served the children and any family needing food. The food was shipped in by sacks and included potatoes and carrots with varying surplus supplies. Seabrook school principal Jim Bay helped serve the food after it was cleaned by ladies from the community. Mrs. L. Gale cooked all the meals.

Over the years, Seabrook has seen its share of hurricanes blowing in from the Gulf and causing great damage. But, the town always bounced back because of the people. The 1900 and 1915 storms, hurricanes Carla and Alicia all left their mark on the community.

In 1898, land where Timber Cove is today sold for about $25 per acre. Today subsidence and the effects of hurricanes have claimed much of the sought-after waterfront property. Just before the turn of the century, the mean sea level for both "the flats" and "old Seabrook" was 15 feet, now it is around 12 feet.

Electricity came to Seabrook in 1927, followed by natural gas in 1932. Telephones were very scarce before the 1950s and when they did become more available, they operated on eight-party lines. Everyone used septic tanks, water wells and even outdoor toilets before 1954 and the creation of the water and sewer district.

Seabrook remained unincorporated until 1961, when one night LaPorte annexed the town. Not wanting to be part of LaPorte, several community leaders convinced that city to let Seabrook incorporate so no one else could annex the town. But at the time, the town had no money to call an election, so the Ladies Auxiliary wrote the check and Seabrook became a city.

Remember when . . .

On February 12, 1899, temperatures fell to eight degrees in the area and Galveston Bay froze solid. But if you think it was a once-in-a-lifetime occurence... on February 8 and 9, 1933, temperatures hit 15 and 17 degrees respectively, and the bay froze again!

Flash Back

COTTAGES ON THE LAKE FRONT SEABROOK

The summer resort atmosphere around Seabrook drew many people from Houston who built summer homes on lakefront property. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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Historical Chronology of Seabrook, Texas

The First 100 Years

By C. David Pomeroy, Jr.

1820 — While using Galveston Island as his base of operations from 1816 to 1820, the pirate Jean Laffite frequently visits the Seabrook area. Mr. Taylor (for whom Taylor Lake was named) and his brother-in-law, Mr. Roach, provide Laffite and his men with game and fish. Rumors begin that Laffite buried treasure in the area. Moses Austin enters Texas and secures a grant for settlement for 300 Anglo-American families. Indianapolis, Indiana, is founded. The statue, "Venus de Milo", is discovered on an Aegean island. Sir Walter Scott writes *Ivanhoe.*

1830 — Ritson Morris moves from Old Nacogdoches to the Seabrook area with his wife Minerva and daughter Virginia. Morris builds their home near the mouth of Clear Lake, fronting on the bay. Chicago is laid out on Lake Michigan. The first full cargo of bananas arrives at New York. Belva Lockwood is the first woman nominated for the presidency. Mexico enacts law prohibiting immigrations from the United States.

1832 — Mr. Morris receives a Mexican land grant on Nov. 14 for the land that will later be the site of Seabrook. A.C. and J.K. Allen (founders of the city of Houston) arrive in Texas looking for real estate investment opportunities.

1835 — Friendly Indians on a hunting party drop in for food at the Morris home. Chili powder is developed in Texas. P.T. Barnum begins his career in show business.

1836 — Prisoner Santa Anna spends the night at the Morris home enroute to Freeport. His identity is uncovered when a parrot screams the name of the cook, "Savannah", and the men thought it said "Santa Anna." Texas wins independence from Mexico at the Battle of San Jacinto. Houston is founded in August. The Colt six-shooter is patented.

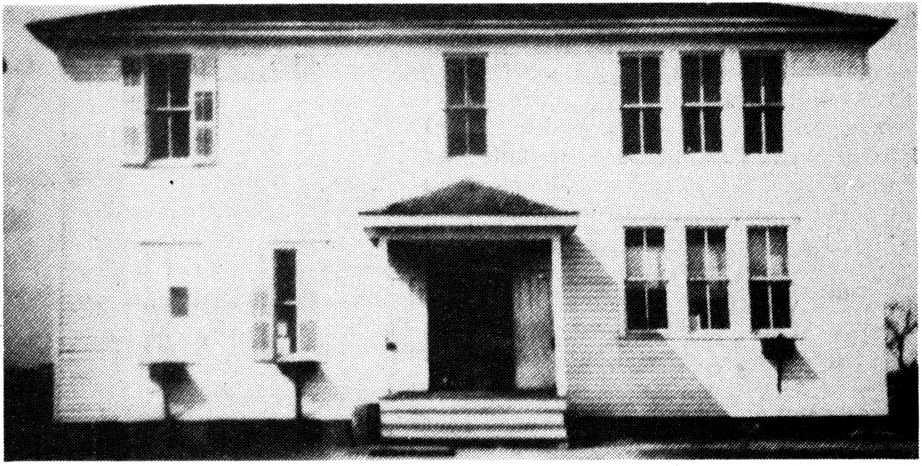
1876 — A channel is cut across Morgan's Point to allow ocean-going ships into the "Buffalo Bayou Ship Channel." Alexander Bell patents the telephone.

1879 — As people settle in the area, the community becomes known as Morris Cove. A schoolhouse is built by Alfred Menard and his brother-in-law Ed Brantly. It doubles as a church on Sundays with Rev. Peter Nicholson as the first pastor. The Palm brothers build the first store in the community. Jim Martyn's father purchases his farm on Middle (Armand) Bayou. Houston gets its first telephone exchange. Leadville, Colorado, becomes the world's largest silver camp. Thomas Edison demonstrates the first practical incandescent lightbulb. Milk is sold in glass milk bottles for the first time and saccharin is discovered.

1884 — Houston gets its first public electric light system: $3 per month for a 16-candle light burning all night or $1.50 per month if it is turned off by 9:30 p.m.

1891 — Townsite of LaPorte is laid out. Houston's population exceeds 27,000.

Flash Back


In the early 1900s, Seabrook built the town's first school for students attending first through eighth grade. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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1892 — The communities of Middle Bayou/Killdare (on Armand Bayou) and Red Bluff are well established. Deer Park, Genoa and Deepwater (later a part of Pasadena) are founded. The townsite of Pasadena is first promoted, even though the plat is not filed until 1896. Construction begins on a railroad from Houston to LaPorte which will be extended through Seabrook by 1896.

1895 — Seabrook W. Sydnor purchases 263.3 acres from Rev. Nicholson for an average price of $35 per acre in May. Pasadena gets its first schoolhouse, a converted chicken coop. Long-distance telephone service is established in Houston. Outlaw John Wesley Hardin is killed in El Paso. *The Band Played On* is a popular song of the day and *America the Beautiful* is set to music. The Supreme Court declares income tax illegal.

1896 — Construction of the Galveston, LaPorte & Houston Railroad connecting LaPorte and North Galveston (San Leon) is completed through Seabrook. The plat for the townsite of Seabrook is filed June 12 and a post office is established. Ed Palms becomes the first postmaster and operates the post office out of his mercantile store. LaPorte and Deepwater both have weekly newspapers. "The Crash at Crush" (near Waco, Texas) is staged where two trains run into each other as 50,000 watch. Two spectators are killed from flying debris. Gasoline automobile manufacturing begins in Michigan. Sears, Roebuck & Co.'s first catalog is published. Marconi invents the wireless telegraph.

1897 — Houston's first "horseless carriage" is demonstrated and the first asphalt street is paved in Houston. Boston builds the first U.S. subway.

1898 — South across Clear Creek, the Bradford and Kipp families subdivided some of their land to establish the township of Evergreen (name changed in 1910 to Kemah). The Harrisburg to LaPorte Road (Highway 225) is paved with shell. Teddy Roosevelt and a train-load of "Rough Riders" stop in Houston. The Spanish-American war begins. H.G. Wells writes his *War of the Worlds*.

1900 — Shipbuilders J.C. Ballentine (Seabrook) and Harmon Platzer (Kemah) build the first Seabrook-Kemah ferry. It is powered by a hand-cranked cable system. Previously a skiff was used. The team swam across and the wagon straddled the skiff (wheels in the water). Ansul Wiltsie builds a house on Meyer Street near the railroad tracks. Anne, his wife, uses the sitting room as a library when friends give her books. Soon the Seabrook Library Guild is formed. Second Street is paved with shell. The Houston population hits 44,633 with 2,017 telephone subscribers. A hurricane hits Galveston in September and kills 6,000 people. The tobacco crop in Deepwater is totally destroyed as is Samuel's bath house, pavilion and bandstand at Sylvan Beach. Hitchcock and Kemah are almost completely wiped out.

1901 — Ben Campbell purchases the Seabrook Townsite at public auction for $1,600 ($6 per acre). Kleinworth's Meat Market is established. The Lucas Gusher comes in at Spindletop on January 10. President McKinley delivers a speech in Houston in May and is assassinated in September. Teddy Roosevelt is the youngest person to become president. Jergen's Lotion is introduced and the first practical electric vacuum cleaner is invented.

1903 — The Seabrook Land Company of Houston files a revised layout of Seabrook on February 27 and it is recorded on March 1. Buffalo Bayou is declared polluted.

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The first speeding ticket is issued in Houston for exceeding the six-mph limit. The first American cross-continent automobile race is won by a Packard taking 60 days to cross the United States. The Wright brothers make the first powered airplane flight. A patent is applied for on the ice cream cone. Carry Nation starts her anti-saloon career.

1905 — Seabrook now boasts of the Rugers Hotel at Clear Lake, the Seabrook Hotel on the bay, the Whitredge Beer Saloon, the Isensee Saloon, Rodick's Restaurant and Dick Larrabee's Grocery. The first Methodist Church is built. Houston passes a "no flirting" ordinance. The State of Texas buys the Alamo. Spiegel puts out its first catalog.

1906 — Frank Annello opens the Seabrook Ridge Restaurant & Bar and by 1911 claims it the "place that made Seabrook famous." Meanwhile, Dr. J.T. Oliver opens an office in Seabrook and one in Galveston. The Goose Creek oil field is discovered in Baytown. The San Francisco earthquake hits April 18. The first radio broadcast of voice and music booms out of Massachusetts.

1910 — A new brick library building is erected. Dr. Curry opens an office in town and Ed Davis builds his home. The Seabrook School is part of Common School District No. 13 which includes Lomax, Middle Bayou and Morgan's Point. Harris County purchases 130 acres including the Rugers Hotel and opens the Seabrook School for Delinquent Boys. Meanwhile across Clear Creek, the town of Evergreen changes its name to Kemah in order to get a post office. The first airplane flight in Texas occurs on February 18 at the soon-to-be-named townsite of South Houston. Houston's population reaches 78,800 and the skyscraper, Carter's Office Building, is completed, an unheard of 16-stories high. The Boy Scouts of America is founded.

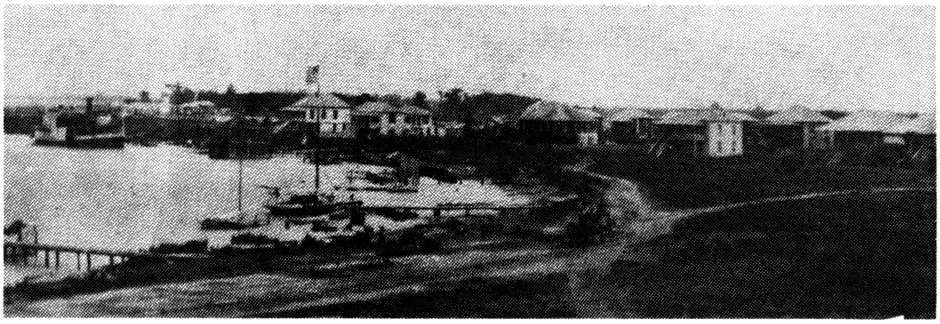
1912 — The Seabrook Cemetery is founded, previously it was known as the Seureau-Kellett Family Cemetery. Arizona and New Mexico become states of the United States. The Beverly Hills Hotel opens. The first successful parachute jump is made and the *Titanic* sinks in April.

1915 — W.R. Scott of Southern Pacific builds his house, Deepend, on Galveston Bay at the "Surf" stop on the newly completed Galveston Bay scenic route of the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio Railroad (owned by Southern Pacific). Shortly afterwards a special commuter train, the Suburban, begins its twice-daily run from Houston. J.S. Cullinan (founder of Texaco) has a "gasoline-lighting system" installed in his house in Pasadena. Also, a ferry is established at Pasadena. When a hurricane strikes on August 17, several World War I troops stationed at Seabrook and League City are killed. A cattle-rustling war breaks out in the Rio Grande Valley. The *Lusitania* is sunk by the Germans. Kraft processed cheese is introduced.

1918 — Louis E. Chapman and Joseph P. Schwander are assigned to the newly constructed Ellington Air Base as chauffeurs. Women are allowed to vote for the first time in Texas. Women over 30 in Britain get to vote. It will be two more years before women will get the right to vote in the United States. New York City starts using daylight savings time in March. German aviation ace, "The Red Baron", is killed in April. Germany surrenders in November and "The Great War" is over.

David Pomeroy is an attorney by education, works in the family oil and gas development business and is a local historian by desire. He has written numerous historical articles for the Houston Chronicle, Pasadena Citizen, Pasadena City Magazine, Deaf Smith Register, *and the* Pasadena Record *(newsletter of the Pasadena Historical Society). He is a past president of the Pasadena Historical Society, currently vice president of the Pasadena Early Settlers Association, has served on the Pasadena Sesquicentennial Commission and has lectured extensively on the history of southeast Harris County.*

Flash Back



During the early years of Seabrook, owning a summer home along Galveston Bay was very popular among wealthy Houstonians. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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Thousands Know The Kemah Ferryman

The following article was written in the fall of 1922 and gives an insight into life around Seabrook as recorded in The Houston Post *on October 15 of that year.*

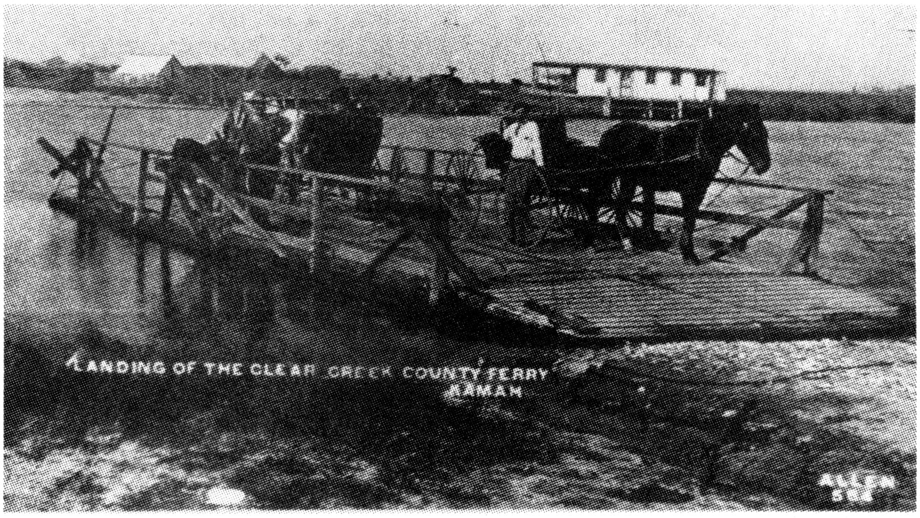
Have you ever sat on a pier at Kemah angling for a stubborn crab with a piece of meat tied to a string?

You sought the friendly shade of a yacht that lay along side and let the meat sink slowly down into the cool blue depths around the barnacle-covered wooden pile. The scorching heat of the lazy vacation day held everything in stillness and, as you waited patiently for the crab you couldn't see and had no earthly use for if you caught it, there came to your becalmed mind a complete willingness to "let the rest of the world go by," to remain on in passive, motionless existence to an infinite time in the distant future.

So the sea and the sunshine and the stillness bewitched you. Or, in your more active moods you boated, fished or swam. But overall was the spirit of quietness, a feeling of the utter unimportance of man-made hours, minutes and seconds, and there grew in your mind a suspicion that all the rushing to and fro of the human race and the congested centers of population perhaps drove away the very peace and happiness that all the millions were seeking.

And so, you would have been in a frame of mind to understand the life of George Dudley, who serves virtually every visitor to Kemah.

For 21 years his strong arms have turned the wooden wheel that propels the ferry carrying vehicles from Kemah to the highways that lead to Houston and the north. He is now 76 years old and he



Long before the infamous drawbridge and today's Clear Creek Channel Bridge, residents rode a hand-pulled ferry to cross the creek between Seabrook and Kemah. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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tells you that he has worn out three ferries, but that the fourth is about to wear him out. But his heartiness and his smile cast doubt on the assertion and you feel quite sure that he will win in the battle of life over the craft which he operates.

George Dudley first began operating the Kemah ferry in 1901. He was born within a few miles of the spot and had spent his entire life fishing and boating on the bay. So he had seen comparatively little of the world or its ways. Yet, spending his life there in one of the out-of-the-way places of the world, he has watched the progress and changes of that world and become wise in its ways to a degree that would do justice to many an urbanite.

For past him each day has trickled the representatives of every section and class of that world. At first a trickle, farmers and fishermen, a few a day, in buggies and wagons and surries and "spring-wagons." Then came the first wheezing automobiles with their many ailments. But soon they came in larger numbers, machines daily becoming more efficient, more practical.

And then, indeed, George Dudley began to get acquainted with all the kinds of people that make up the world. The motor car brought the out-of-the-way ferry into proximity of a big city, it turned a little-known rural country into a pleasure resort.

Gradually the tide of travelers became stronger. As months went by the motor cars were more powerful, more beautiful and always more numerous. The ferry that once made a few lazy trips a day across the creek that divides Harris and Galveston counties was kept in almost constant operation. And still the travelers came. Kemah became a town and developed ambitions to become a most popular bayshore resort. Finally an assistant was allowed for the ferry, and George Dudley no longer has to carry the whole burden of its operation on his aging shoulders.

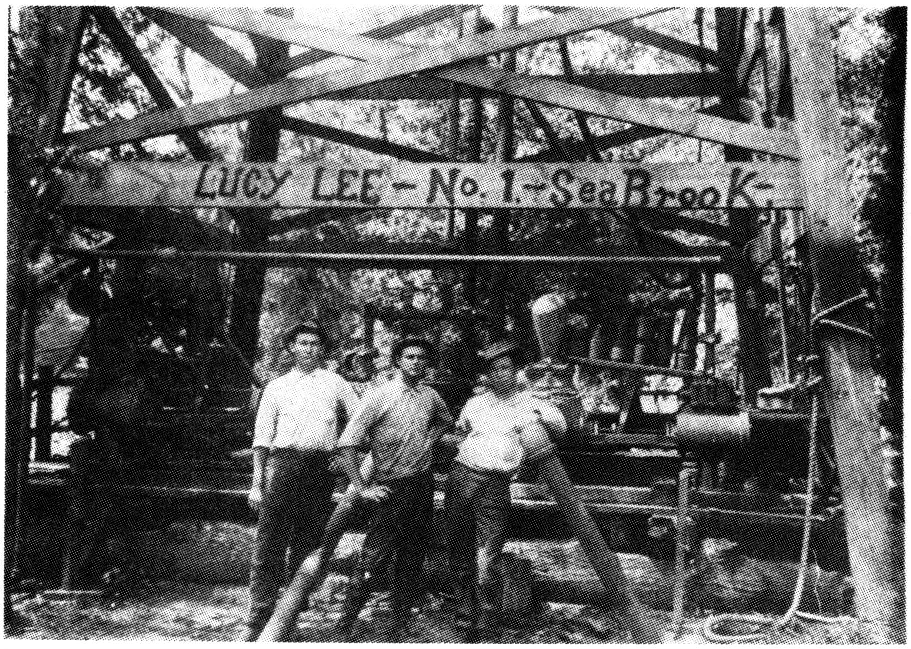
The thousands that pass over the ferry yearly know George Dudley. Some ride over with never a glance in his direction, hardly a thought as to his labor in propelling them across the creek. Others watch with interest the big wooden wheel slowly pulled around, wondering perhaps of the thoughts and the life of a man who is there always to pull it. Many a motorist climbs out of his car to lend his strength on the wheel and is rewarded, if he seeks it, with exact information on the best fishing places and the best time to fish. If the self-appointed assistant will tarry a little longer, he can learn of the great storms that have swept the bay and the creek that pours into it, of the sweeping of houses from the lowlands, of casting of the ferry far inland and of many things of interest concerning Galveston Bay and the Gulf Coast county.

George Dudley has a little home near the ferry crossing. He has raised four sons and three daughters, two of whom remain with him in his old age. He had elder brothers in the civil war and sons in the world war.

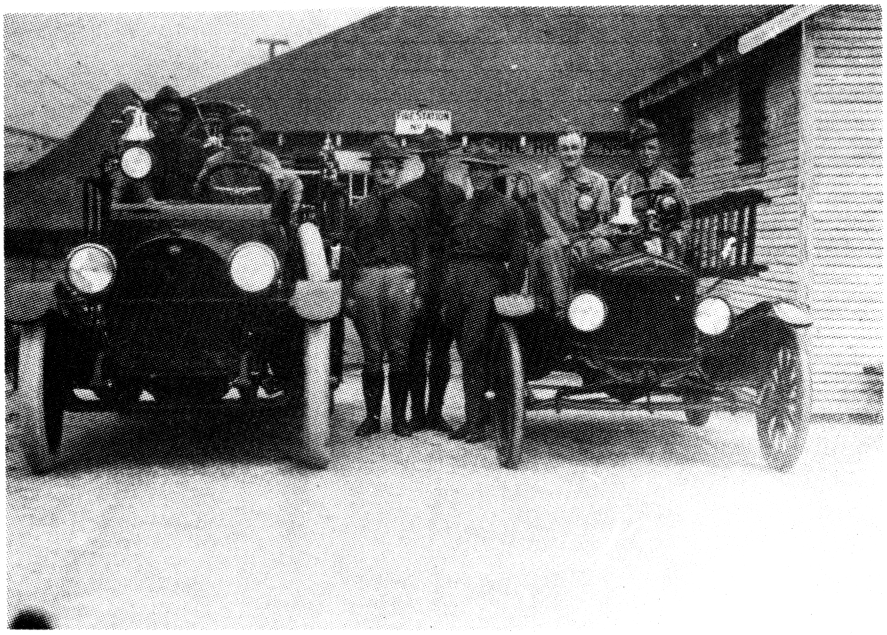
Perhaps many of those who ride by him in the big cars would do well to compare their lives to his, to ask themselves if they had experienced the same contentment and joy of healthful living and if their lives have meant more to their country than has that of George Dudley, who for 21 years has carried the travelers back and forth across Clear Creek.

Reprinted with permission from The Houston Post.

Flash Back



With the drilling of the Lucy Lee No. 1, Seabrook entered the oil production era. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum



During World War I, troops such as these firemen were stationed in Seabrook as well as League City and Texas City. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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Although Applied Design Printers has the capability to produce this magazine, we did not.

Mark and Sandi Salbert

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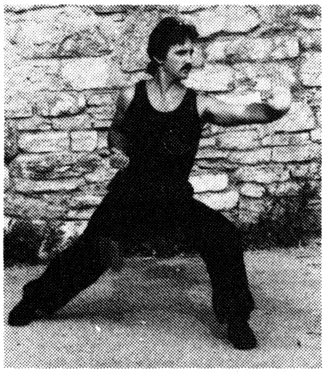

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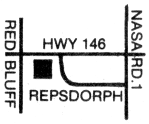

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Seabrook Volunteer Fire Department

The following article was contributed from the files of the Seabrook Volunteer Fire Department and was written by the 1975 volunteers for the Firefighters' 100th Anniversary Magazine.

During the pre-Pearl Harbor days of 1941, eight mostly middle-aged citizens began battle with another, closer enemy — fire. Thus, the Seabrook Volunteer Fire Department was born, and Oscar Key became its first fire chief. Before too long the middle-aged citizens realized a firefighter must be physically capable as well; so some young fellows were recruited and trained, and James Graves became chief. This allowed most of the founders to step out. (Four are still Seabrook residents.) In 1943, Sidney R. Brummerhop Sr. joined the department. Sid Sr. is still active at SVFD drills and fires.

The first apparatus was an old Fair Maid bread truck fitted with a tank and a centrifugal pump that is claimed to have out-squirted two mutual aid, factory-built pumpers at a waterfront club fire. In 1945, SVFD briefly stopped because the equipment stopped — for lack of repair funds. The town was irate at first, but a meeting was held, the hat was passed and SVFD has been active ever since.

SEABROOK TEXAS
SEABROOK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT

The Seabrook Volunteer Fire Department station and equipment in 1957.

A war surplus pumper was acquired later, but the driving engine eventually gave out; so the first man responding would hitch up his car for towing the pumper to the fire. Chief Grave's kid brother, Charles, often steered the pumper. (He later became chief.)

In 1953, SVFD turned a new Dodge truck into a fine combination pumper that is now serving the city's water department. Two years later, SVFD obtained an American LaFrance rig — a 1921 model that, sadly, no longer exists. Both units were, until recently, shown in SVFD's letterhead as was the present three-bay house, which was built by the volunteers.

Ellis Reel is now chief of this southeast Harris County fire department with its modern pumpers, custom rescue van and extensive alert and command radio system. Expansion is planned to better serve the district, which encloses two incorporated communities between the space center and Galveston Bay.

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A dream come true . . .

Edward H. White II Memorial Youth Center

This story ws written as part of the program just before the opening of the Ed White II Memorial Youth Center, September 1971.

By Emogene Brummerhop

A dream come true... but the dreamer will never know it.

This is what the Edward H. White II Memorial Youth Center, which will open its doors Sunday September 19, 1971 at 2:30 p.m., is — a dream that was in the heart of Astronaut Ed White when he gave the $500 from an award he had received to the Seabrook United Methodist Church of which he was a member, for just such a building for youth. It was a fund for a building where youth could grow strong physically and spiritually; a place dedicated to meet the needs of all the youth of the community from all walks of life, regardless of religious background. The faith of a mustard seed, this was what Ed White had that such a building could be built. He had a love for gymnastics, scouting and, at one time, had his eyes set on the Olympic Games.

On June 3, 1965, two astronauts, James McDivitt and Ed White, took off in Gemini IV, and on this mission Ed White thrilled the world with his description of his 21-minute space walk outside the spacecraft. He was the first American to walk in space.

On January 27, 1967, the nation and the world were shocked by the deaths of Gus Grissom, Edward H. White II and Roger Chaffee in a flash fire in the spacecraft at Cape Kennedy.

The reason for the building now became alive, the dream did not die. A memorial for Ed White, the name became the Edward H. White II Memorial Youth Center. The $500 fund began to grow as the people in Seabrook and the surrounding area began to make donations and, as word got around, many others wanted to share in it. Donations came from all over the nation — from Sunday school classes, churches of all kinds, Boy and Girl Scouts, auxiliaries, astronauts, their wives and children, bridge clubs, space writers, a writer for *Playboy Magazine*, school teachers and classes, foundations, flyers, sports associations, yacht clubs, lady Elks, service stations, petroleum companies, a service man who sent so much of his pay plus a penny for every word of profanity he used, a school teacher from New Orleans who sent $5 per month and many, many others. The donations grew to thousands of dollars.

Leopold Meyers of Houston caught the spirit of the project and in turn challenged Bob Hope who came forth with the *Bob Hope Extra Special* held in the Astrodome on May 16, 1970. Many, many stars took part. The Edward H. White II Memorial Youth Center became a reality in four short years thanks to all the donations and the funds made from the *Bob Hope Extra Special.* A building and furnishings costing $330,000 has

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been built, with a floor area of 20,000 square feet.

Hanging in the main entrance will be a portrait of Bob Hope. There will also be an Inspiration Room, the only museum-type place in the world where there will be space mementoes of spiritual significance.

There will be a chapel, library, activity rooms, a teen room, dark room, kitchen facility and a gym with an official-size basketball court, lighted scoreboards, mats, gymnastic equipment, ping pong and pool tables, a trampoline and a universal weight machine.

The building is owned and operated by Seabrook United Methodist Church as a service to the entire Clear Lake area community. There will be free time for the youth, but league basketball, volleyball and other events will involve people from "all over".

Although the building is dedicated to reaching junior and senior high school youth, programs will be provided for pre-teens and adults as well. Parents are responsible for pre-schoolers. They can take part only when the programs are designed for them and can only be at the building at this time. Since the utilities of the building must be paid, money-making projects will be held and contributions welcomed. The center is meant to be used. Guidelines are being set up and a curfew established.

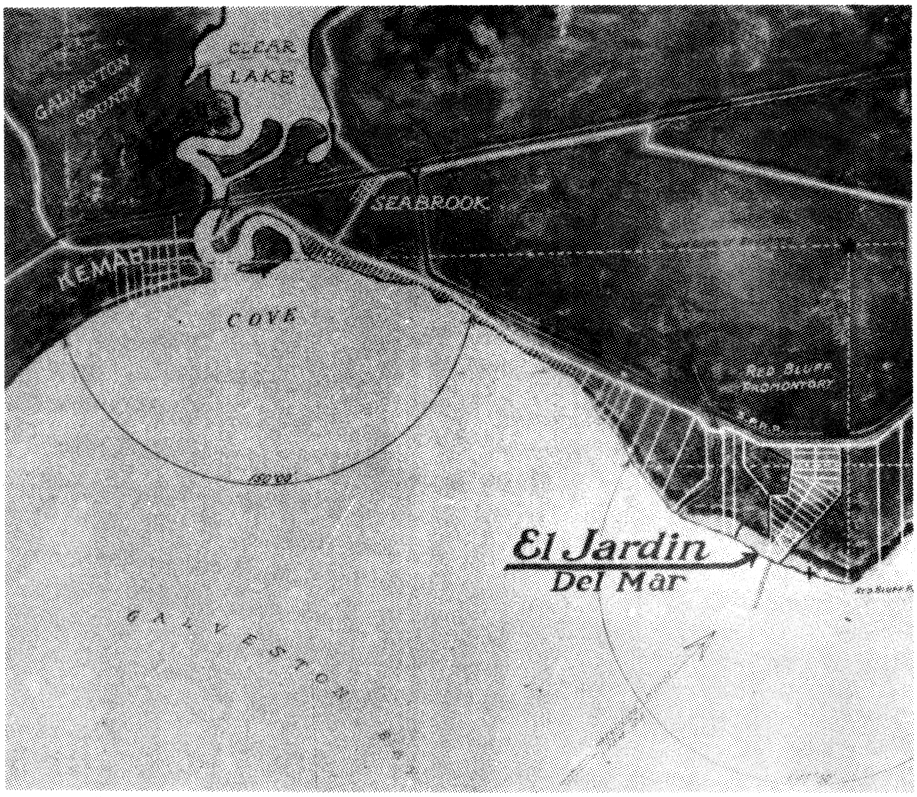
If you have a special talent and want to work in the Ed White building, get in touch with Glen Holbrook, coordinator of the building. He is willing to work and help in any program but will be unable to supervise each program.

Any club or group wanting to know about the facility and the programs offered may invite Holbrook to speak at their club or organizational meetings. Holbrook said, "We want to run this facility in a wholesome atmosphere where parents will not worry about their youth when they are with us. In this manner, we hope the building will be an extension of the church's ministry."

While it is on Bob Hope's agenda to be here for the opening of the building, we do not have a confirmation at this time. Bishop Kenneth Copeland of this Texas conference will be the presiding officer at the consecration and dedication service of the Ed White II Memorial Youth Center on Sunday with Rev. Bob Parrott of the Seabrook United Methodist Church.

Today the Ed White Memorial Youth Center operates as a non-profit organization dedicated to the original goals of Ed White. Over the years, the center has grown to include a full-service day care, an after-school program for elementary school students, on-going programs for teenagers and numerous programs for adults as well.

Flash Back



As shown on this hand-drawn map rendering, the old Southern Pacific Railroad literally ran along the bayside near the summer home properties. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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Founded in the early 1900s

Seabrook Methodist Church

By Francis Ballentine and
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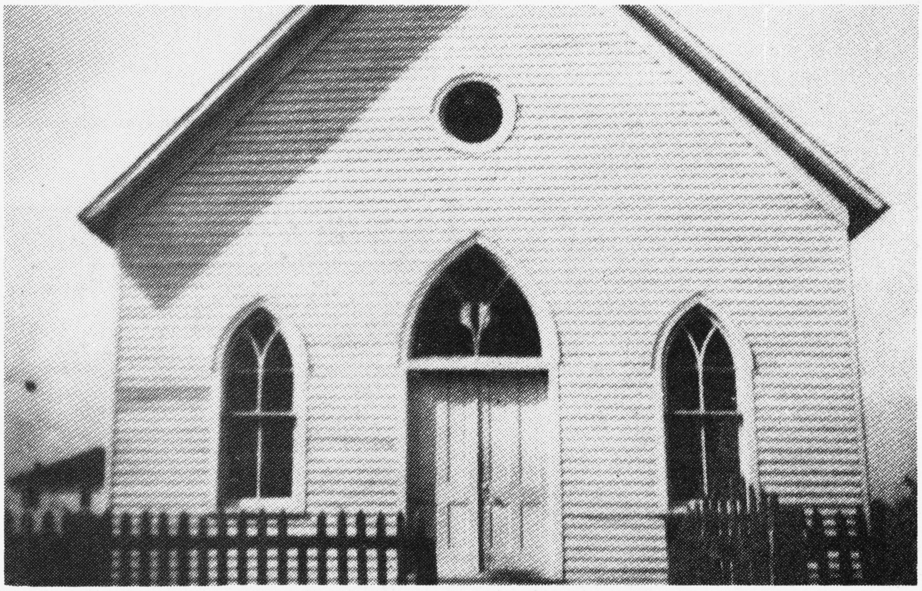

Seabrook's original Methodist Church also served as a town meeting center. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

The Seabrook Methodist Church has been in existence since the early 1900s. It was a small one-room, wood-frame building of about 30 by 60 feet on Hall Street in Seabrook. It had a bell tower, and the original bell is in the courtyard by the Milby room and the Sunday school rooms at the present time. The building had colored-glass windows and a colored-glass picture of the Sermon on the Mount above the pulpit. Later, a foyer was built on the church and, several years after that, four Sunday school classrooms were built on the back. Until that time, the Sunday school classes were held in the sanctuary with curtains drawn. After the classrooms were added, the Sunday school classes assembled for their openings in both the sanctuary and the large room in the back. The youth used the sanctuary for classrooms with the smaller children going to the small rooms in the back of the church and the adults going to the rooms above the old Chapman Dry Goods Store for their Sunday school class.

Since the church was the only one in the area, it was more or less a community church, but always with a Methodist minister. The first services in the church were held on Easter Sunday by the Rev. P.E. Nicholson, whose heirs later sold the property to the church where the present sanctuary now stands. The parsonage for the old church was across the street on Hall Street and later another one was built behind the church, facing Hardesty Street.

During the early 1900s, the sanctuary was heated only by a large wood heater and lighted by hanging oil lamps. Later, when gas and electricity were brought to Seabrook, the sanctuary was heated with a large gas heater and electric lights were installed.

Seabrook Methodist Church shared its minister with Kemah and League City. Some Sundays the minister held as many as three services a day, with the churches alternating times. Some of the services were held up due to the raising of the drawbridge for the weekend boat traffic.

The finances for the church were

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given by everyone in the community, whether they attended church or not, and the proceeds were obtained by knocking on doors seeking donations from permanent and summer residents.

Some of the ministers serving the small church were Rev. Don Pever, the late Rev. Don Harwell, Dist. Supt. Compton Riley, Rev. W. Hawthorn, Rev. Garland Reeves and Rev. Jim Bauman. Rev. Bauman was minister when the move was made to the present site, with the sanctuary being the present Milby room. Other ministers serving this church were Rev. Gordon Groteaux, Rev. Edwards, Rev. Jim Meadows, Rev. Conrad Winborn, Rev. Bob Parrott, Rev. Lloyd Giles, Rev. Jewel McClure, Rev. Elmer Mayne and the present minister, Dr. Charles Millikan.

Many innoculation clinics were held at the church with doctors coming in from other towns to assist, especially after hurricanes, epidemics or when children were found lacking needed shots. The church was more or less a governing body for the city, since Seabrook was not incorporated until 1961.

The finances of the church were kept going at this time by the birthday calendars and the $5-a-plate banquets held in the school gym of Bay Elementary School, with the members donating the food and the time preparing it, along with donations received. A bazaar and rummage sale was held each year, sponsored by the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

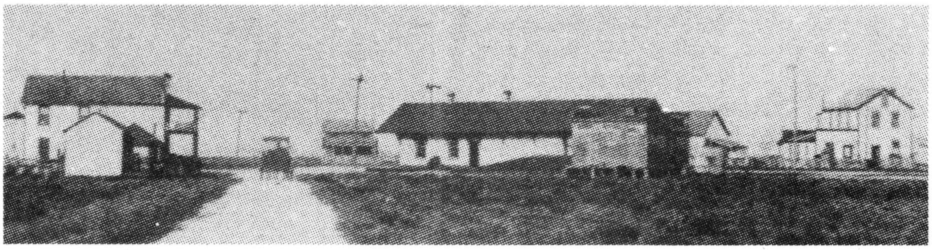
The members of the church, both men and women, kept up the janitorial services of the church as well as the repairs and yard work. The choir, Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Methodist Youth Fellowship were always an active part of the church program.

When NASA was opened, the church grew in membership including a number of astronauts. Due to the growth of the congregation and a need for larger facilities, and being fortunate enough to have the church free of debt, the present sanctuary was built. The Rev. Connie Winborn was minister at that time. Having some of the astronauts speak in the church made the church historically known throughout the world. Later, when the country was unfortunate enough to lose some of its astronauts, some of the memorial services were held at the Seabrook United Methodist Church.

The late Ed White was an active member of the church, working with the youth. Having received a gift of money, Ed White presented it to the church as a beginning of a fund, with the hope of someday seeing his dream of a youth center for the area come true.

Several years later, Rev. Bob Parrott became the minister of the church and was instrumental in obtaining Bob Hope and many other entertainers in presenting the *Bob Hope Extra Special* in the Astrodome in Houston, with all proceeds going to build the new Edward White Memorial Youth Center. The Memorial center is now being used for church facilities and for the youth and adults of the area. Rev. Parrott was also instrumental in helping to get the David and Mabel White Senior Citizens Center started. It now serves the senior citizens of Seabrook and surrounding areas.

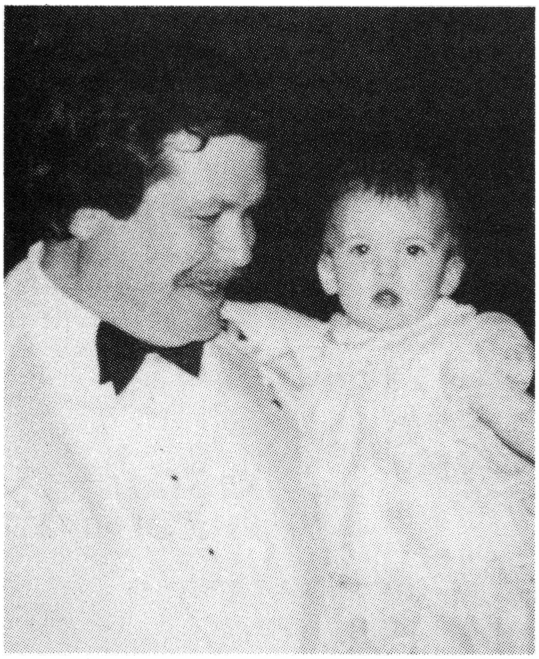
Flash Back



A look down the old Clear Lake Road in Seabrook during the end of the 19th century. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

Remember when . . .

Santa Anna, the deposed "Napoleon of the West", was privileged to spend one of his last nights on Texas soil in Seabrook. A couple of days after the Battle of San Jacinto, Deaf Smith, along with several other men and a Mexican prisoner, requested lodging from the Ritson Morris family, It was the Morris' talkative parrot that actually uncovered the identity of the men's closely guarded prisoner when he screamed out, "Savannah, Savannah." Santa Anna, not realizing that the Morris' cook's name was Savannah and that Polly probably just wanted her morning cracker, mistook the parrot's screeching for his own name and almost jumped out of his chair. Mr. Morris confronted Deaf Smith with his suspicions about the man's identity and he reluctantly admitted that their prisoner was indeed Santa Anna. Under Sam Houston's orders, they were trying to get Texas' most infamous prisoner safely to Freeport.



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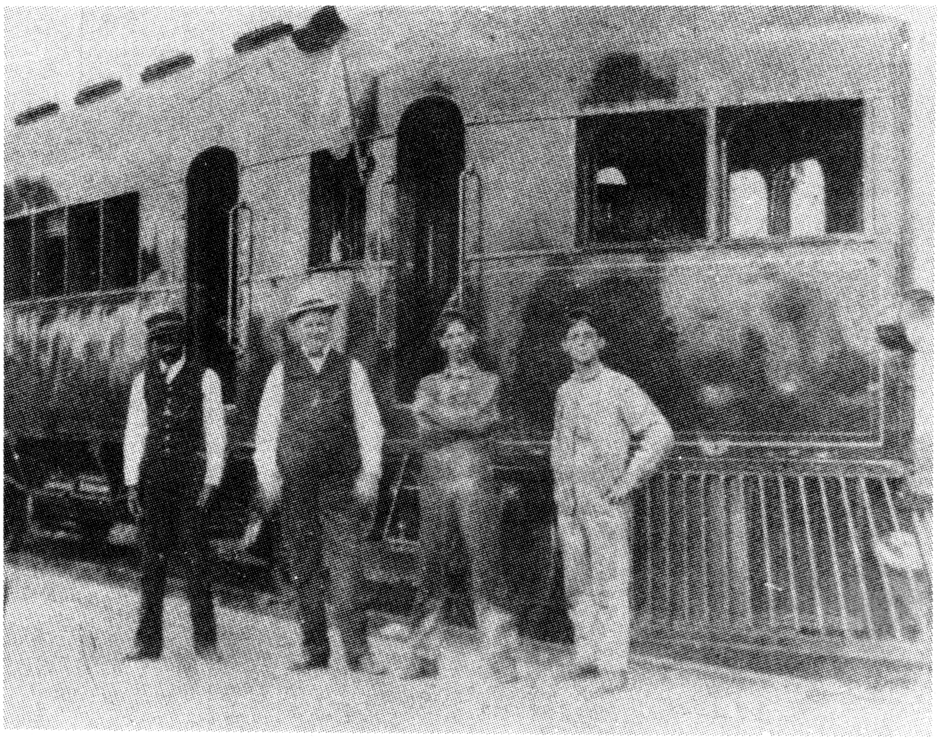
Seabrook Restaurants

LAREDO'S RESTAURANTE

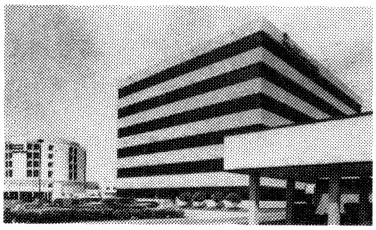
Warm, personable Laura Solar gave up a teaching career to enter the family restaurant business, known as Laredo's. It is well known for the good, fresh, homemade dishes that authentic Mexican kitchens specialize in. For many years, Laredo's has been part of the Seabrook and bay area restaurant scene. The food is consistently enjoyable and served in comfortable unpretentious family surroundings. Mom and Dad can take the kids out to eat at Laredo's, coming away pleasingly full, yet having enough cash left over to bring the whole family back again and again on a regular basis.

There's nothing high-falutin' or phony about Laredo's. You get honest, wholesome food at honest, reasonable prices. In a state overrun with Mexican

Flash Back



Seabrook's popularity as a resort community rose even more when the commuter train, the Suburban, began running between Houston and the bay area. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum



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Jim Hargrove has been helping area businesses for more than fifteen years. His customers have remained loyal because nobody in the Bay Area "takes care of business" better than Jim.

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restaurants, loyal customers will pass them all up, driving many miles, just to eat at Laredo's. It's not unusual to find the same customers coming back week after week, for all the years they've been in business. A second generation is now bringing their children to the place that mom and dad took them to eat when they were kids.

Family owned and operated, Laredo's caters to your family. Now a landmark in Seabrook, it is our first and only Mexican restaurant.

CRAZY CAJUN

The only things crazy about the Crazy Cajun Food Factory are the name, the six-foot fence along the west side of the site, the gigantic art deco sign by the side of the road, the little fall-down house with one of the most popular eateries east of the Pecos inside and a parking lot jam-packed with pickups rubbing side guards with a Rolls. Oh yes, add just one more crazy, like all those people just crazy about Crazy Cajun cooking and, that's where the crazies and the buck stops.

A craze for Cajun comestibles is sweeping the country, from Los Angeles to Long Island, from Maine to Mexico. With everyone wanting to eat Cajun, we're lucky to have one of the best Cajun cooking innovators right here in Seabrook. Word is out, people are coming from miles around to join the Crazy Cajun culinary cult, spiced up and seasoned with some of Sonny's sunny charm.

Sonny, the down-home lad, a dad as proud of his little family as he is of his victuals. A laid-back over-achiever, Sonny seems to instill the same easy, friendly, no-hassle way into his serving people, who seem to be more family than hired help.

To do things by the proverbial book is a tough enough job, yet the formula of nothing conforming to guidelines printed in the know-it-all books on restaurant decor and business advice has been a winner for Sonny. To run a restaurant, let alone one as successful as the Crazy Cajun is an unbelievable task. Hats off to the Crazy Cajun, as crazy as a fox.

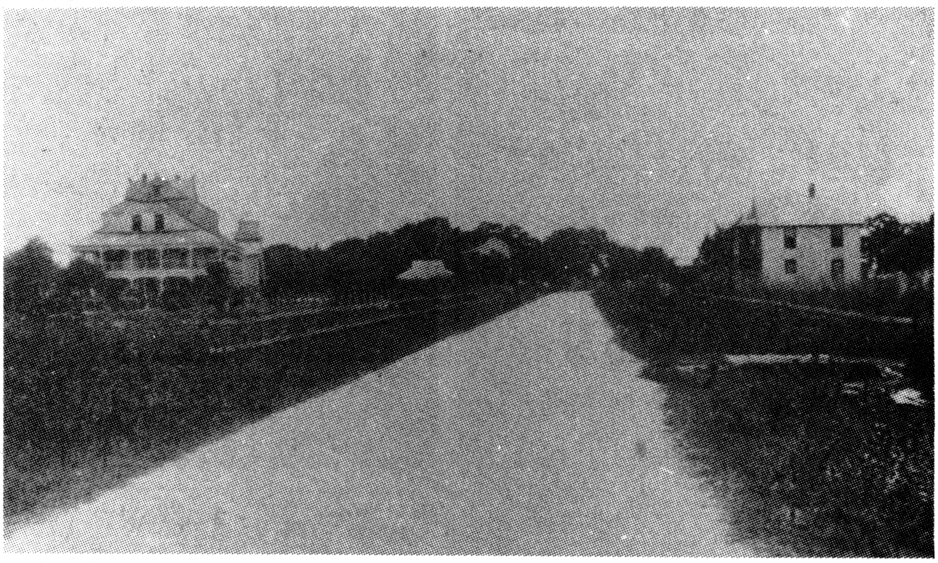
THE SHRIMP HUT

If teamwork is the key to a successful restaurant operation, then the team of Frank and Nancy deserve this year's golden key. Together, Frank and Nancy have worked endless hours to oversee every phase of the Shrimp Hut operation. The growth of the Shrimp Hut over the past few years is a credit to the community. Not only is the food top-notch but you can enjoy it at breakfast, lunch, mid-afternoon and into the evening. Fresh Gulf Coast seafood, prepared under the experienced guidance of Nancy, is the reason for loyal crowds of satisfied customers returning regularly week after week.

The cheerful "picnic in the park" atmosphere of colorful umbrella tables surrounding the new rustic building make you want to stop for a bite, take your shoes off and relax. At noon the tables are filled with executives, coats off, sleeves rolled up, collars open, just wanting a few moments away from the world of artificial light and air. In the evening, especially on weekends, the sailing crowd, clinging to a few more hours of outdoor living, fill the tables and their bellies before hitting the Gulf Freeway traffic, the pressures of Houston and the "got to make a living" week ahead.

Open every morning at 6 a.m. (except Monday), the Shrimp Hut is the gathering place for local notables who view it

Flash Back



It's hard to believe this old country road running between the Rugers Hotel and the home of Ed Davis is now called NASA Road One. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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as their own personal and very special place. With high ceilings, open airy dining areas filled with nautical memorabilia and rich woods, the Shrimp Hut has a homey, warm ambience that is inviting and comfortable. The bold architectural setting, comfortable captain's chairs and "hatch cover" tables add another dimension to dining out. There isn't a better place to have a warm bowl of gumbo on a chilly day than beside the fireplace at the Shrimp Hut. You feel like you're in an old New England inn or a grand north woods fishing lodge. The Shrimp Hut is a delightfully casual family restaurant.

SEABROOK CLASSIC CAFE

An all-purpose restaurant is the best way to describe the Classic Cafe... from ham and eggs to seafood and steaks for the hungry travelers who arrive by car, boat or RV. Classic in name, menu and decor, the busy restaurant has something for everyone. More concerned with well-prepared generous portions than fancy presentations, the down-home food and easy manner is typical of the "classic" Southern cafes found in small towns along the Gulf Coast from Brownsville, Texas, to Apalachicola, Florida.

Surrounded by yacht sales offices, docks and owners who love to sail, the place attracts the sailing enthusiasts as customers. At any time of day or night you will find someone shooting the breeze about the last Gulf gale, near miss or easy sailing trip to Redfish. On the way to the boat, it seems to be the place to bring family and friends to pig out (you can feed a lot of people for little money) before heading out to sea.

The dress code is casual, with top-siders the order of the day. Classic Cafe offers reasonable prices for great food, with service to match.

PIER 8

Down on Todville, the large, rustic redwood building sitting smack in the middle of all the waterfront action is Pier 8. While dining, you can enjoy the

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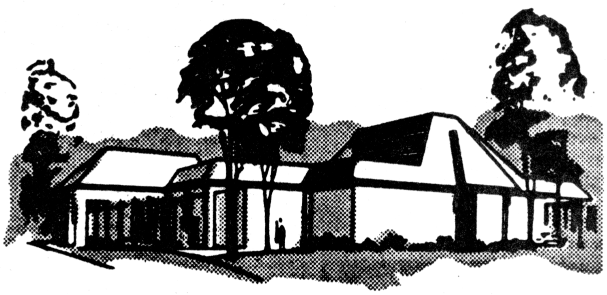

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action-packed scenery of shrimp boats, oyster boats, dock workers and deckhands, handling and culling the thousands of tons of fish and seafood passing through Seabrook waterfront markets.

Rachel McDonald is at the helm of Pier 8, working together with her grandchildren, loving every busy moment. Famous for quality Gulf seafood, Pier 8 is a pleasant place to eat, having all the amenities that go along with a professionally well-run restaurant.

Rachel has taught her grandchildren well, she's a no-nonsense captain demanding and getting the best from all of them, as well as the other employees. As small children, the grandkids learned the restaurant business in Rachel's old cafe. She's a stickler for cleanliness and getting the job done right.

Rachel's career in the restaurant business goes back to her famous Seabrook Hotel, no longer existing. On the roof top, a neon sign, always lit and flashing, was a beacon of hope to the homeless and a sign of joy to the hungry for some of Rachel's good home cooking in her small clean cafe. Nicknamed the "Seabrook Shamrock", it was often referred to as Seabrook's only high-rise. The two-story hotel had a few rooms upstairs, but the cafe on the first level was the eating place where you could always find Rachel, a lady who "did it her way" years before the song was written.

NEPTUNE SUBS

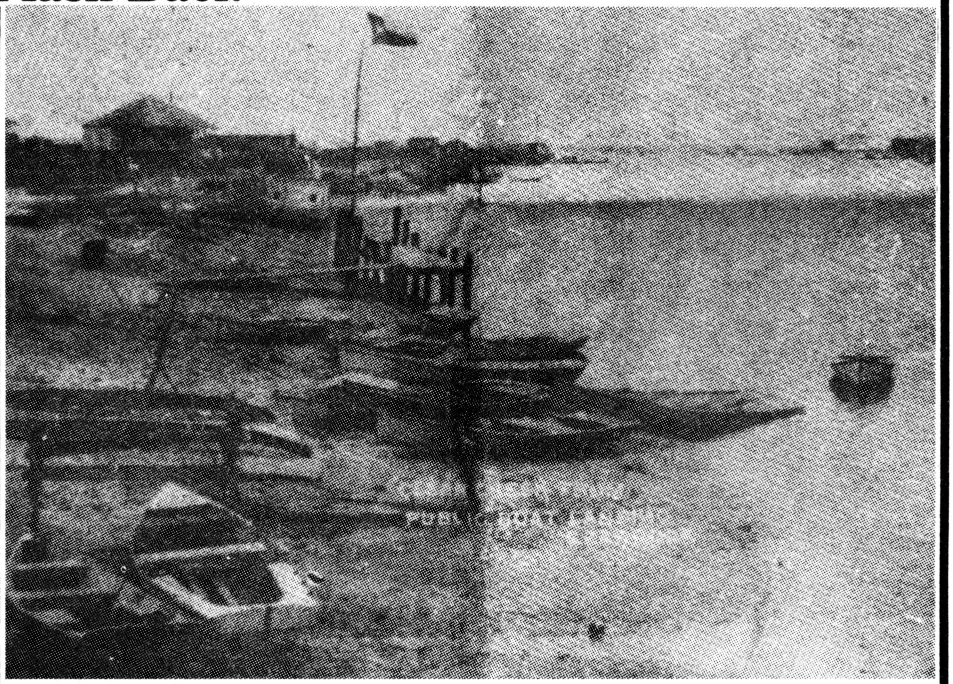
There are several things all restaurant people in Seabrook have in common — dedication to hard work, individuality and a creative desire to do their "own thing". Vinnie, owner of Neptune Subs, is a forerunner in that area. He has given his little yellow and green building just the right "touch of class". Have you noticed the detail in his sign over the door? How about those awnings above the windows? To take a sow's ear and turn it into a silk purse takes a real champ. Vinnie has taken a plain square box of a building and made it charming and inviting. Definitely a class act that he and Seabrook should be proud of.

"What can you do with a sub?" you ask. Have you tried Vinnie's? Just one, is big enough to feed the whole Cocksy army with probably some left over for tomorrow's lunch. Skimpy and cheap are two words not in Vinnie's vocabulary, nor in the way he runs his restaurant. Everything you get at Neptune Subs is homemade and fresh every day. The Tuna Salad Sub is exceptional, with so much good stuff inside, it oozes out with each bite, just like you'd make for yourself at home but without the clean-up mess. With all the fast-food places in the Clear Lake area, Neptune Subs still draws crowds from NASA for lunch when they want a really great sandwich that isn't portioned out on a postal scale, and the bottom line isn't dependent for survival upon that fraction of a nickle profit that big expensive locations swallow up. The stay-at-homes and VCRites keep Neptune Subs orders-to-go busy at night, when mom is just too darn tired to fuss.

MARIBELLE'S

A legend in our time, Maribelle's, the local honky-tonk, is the place to see and be seen. The history of Maribelle's adorns every inch of visible wall space

Flash Back



Long before seafood shops and restaurants lined the Clear Creek Channel, public boat landings lined the channel's banks. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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with old newspapers, snapshots, menus, beer cans, and corsages, now dried and withered from time and dust. The clientele are not always ordinary. To rub elbows with an astronaut, bend an elbow with a world-famous firefighter, brain surgeon, Mrs. America, king of torts, bookie, Madam mogul or bank president is all in a day. The girls from the bank come for lunch. Teachers, drained from the classroom capers, relax with a glass of wine before heading home at the end of the day, just wanting to hear and be around grown-up voices. Maribelle's is a special place, owned and run by a special brand of lady.

Maribelle, queen of the show, is a champ of gutsy showmanship (or is that showwomanship?). Flair, friends, the art of selecting friends and guts, guts, guts... Never losing her cool, keeping aloof of the action, everyone vying for her favors, conversation, drink, ear to listen to a tale or joke... It takes a gutsy lady to handle this scene week after week. It takes a real talent to stay in control.

Raised an Army brat by her adoring parents, Maribelle saw much of the world as a teenager, before marrying a NASAite and settling in Seabrook. Being a free spirit, Maribelle soon had to spread her wings, leaving the nest to open the old Castaway Club on the bay in Kemah. The club was eventually swallowed up by violent tides during a storm, leaving Maribelle to move on to find a new place, which became the now-famous, "hot pink" landmark in Seabrook.

SOUTH TEXAS SMOKEHOUSE

Texas is famous for barbecue, where you'll never neet a man who doesn't have a better method, his own procedure, a recipe, secret sauce, spice or herb to make his barbecue the best in the whole universe. Barbecue, barbeque or BBQ is the national food of Texas, where everyone's an expert regardless of how you spell it.

South Texas Smokehouse is Seabrook's only honest-to-goodness smokehouse establishment. Started by Mrs. Fryday's boys, it has been taken over by Dean Goss, who specializes in large party caterings and corporate picnics so popular with the chemical and oil companies in these parts.

Standing guard at the front door, resembling a gigantic, double-headed hippo or steel-gray creature from outer space, is the smoker. It looms its imposing hunk of metal at customers drawn to it from miles around by odoriferous fumes bellowing forth from its two heads, always standing at attention in front of the restaurant just waiting to do its stuff and satisfying appetites of the most critical critics.

From orders-to-go to going to the order, South Texas covers all bases — a full-service smokehouse pulling away

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FRENCHIE'S VILLA CAPRI

Fast becoming the "In Place" for private parties among the beautiful people of Houston and the bay area is Frenchie's Villa Capri, overlooking Clear Lake on NASA Road One in Seabrook. Owners Frank and Giuseppe Camera, who also own Frenchie's on NASA Road One in Webster, do wonders with food. They're now bringing their talents to Seabrook.

Serving great food, as well as being gregarious, fun loving, artistic and creative people, the brothers and their family delight and charm astronauts, NASA staffers, TV and world press personalities, statesmen and the elite of Texas at Frenchie's, a meeting place for the celebration of food and friends on a daily basis.

Pastas blend with treasures of the sea, veal dishes combine with classic sauces, famous and recorded among the annals of Italy's culinary history. Thick soups, reminiscent of pots-full mom used to make, are laced with pastas, garnished with fresh vegetables and home-grown herbs from the Camera's own garden. Breads and desserts, sinfully delicious, are orchestrated by the brothers whose love and dedication to the task of feeding people happy is their greatest reward for grueling hours spent in the kitchen.

Born and raised in Capri, Italy, Frank and Giuseppe as little boys began working in the kitchens of the grand resort hotels on the island. With cooking careers well underway in Italy, their sister Olga, who lived in America, lured them to the United States and the Clear Lake area. Our gain was Italy's loss.

Despite their busy schedule, Giuseppe himself planned and planted every flower in the gardens at Frenchie's Villa Capri. Frank coordinated the construction work. The grounds and new building addition make a beautiful setting for weddings, receptions, anniversary parties, corporate banquets, any occasion requiring a special place. Welcome to Seabrook! Benvenuto!

PANAMA GRILL

A classy establishment with clientele to match, the Panama Grill is an interesting eatery. The menu is fresh, chic and trendy, offering a unique variety of seafood, meat and fresh vegetable dishes. An open and airy dining room full of wicker, cane and windows adds to the breezy palm-swaying ambience reminiscent of a South American plantation.

Happy, young, good-looking serving people in Panama hats, shorts and bright south-of-the-border shirts complement the total theme of the restaurant. You sense a very upbeat feeling the moment you enter the busy bar area. Everyone is friendly and concerned about pleasing you, which is a refreshing attitude seldom found in today's busy eating places. Everything seems to be a cut above what most other restaurants have to offer. Crisp, freshly-made salads, beautifully garnished and presented, are always generously delicious. Creative seafood presentations, beautifully prepared chicken dishes as well as beef and ribs can more than satisfy the most finicky appetite.

Housed in Lakewood Landing, across from the entrance to Lakewood Yacht Club, Panama Grill adds a new dimension to the list of good restaurants already in Seabrook.

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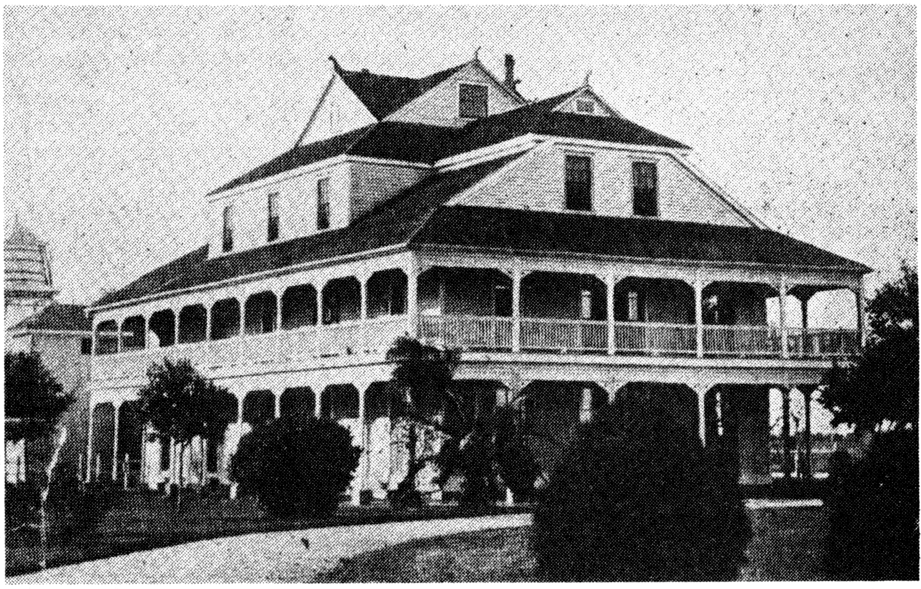

In 1910, Harris County purchased 130 acres along Clear Lake including the Rugers Hotel. The county used the hotel as a home for delinquent and orphaned boys.

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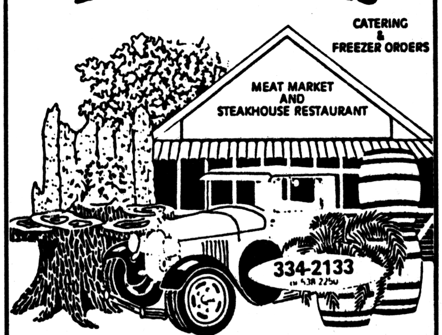
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REGATTA INN

At the bend where Clear Lake runs into the channel leading to Galveston Bay is the magnificent location of the restaurant known as Regatta Inn. The simple rustic interior is a perfect background for the ever-changing view of passing yachts, sailing vessels, shrimp boats, sunsets, birds and clouds that seem to float by, taking with them into another time zone anything related to hassle and stress. Just looking out on the water and the changing colors and moods of Clear Lake is soothing therapy for the most harried individual.

To dine in such surroundings is a treat to the romantic soul — comfortably casual, yet just chic enough to make you feel like this is a special place, patronized by other special people.

It is said, "restaurant is show biz". At the Regatta Inn the view is the show, and a darn hard act to follow. You will find, however, it enhances rather than upstages the excellent food.

Under Larry's careful direction, the food is fresh and well-prepared. His attention to detail never wanes, what you see is what you get, consistent and always good. Not like so many flash-in-the-pan trendy restaurants throughout Houston that come and go.

Famous weekend brunches bring in the same smart Gucci, Ralph Lauren and Gloria V.-clad crowds from neighboring yacht clubs, preferring Larry's Eggs Benedict to mundane huevos served elsewhere. For a luncheon getaway or a night out-on-the-town, away from town, Regatta Inn is as predictable and lovely as the setting sun.

TOOKIE'S

Hamburgers are consumed by more people eating out in restaurants today than any other food in the United States. Tookie's burgers are "haute cuisine".

The little green building by the Methodist Church on Highway 146 is filled with antiques and artifacts from times gone by. Nothing matching, a mish-mash of memorabilia, Tookie's is an interesting and fun place to go with friends because of the overwhelming variety of hamburgers and unique decor.

Notable onion rings are worth mentioning since Tookie's seems to have the market cornered on their preparation, making them different and better than any around. Their hamburgers and onion rings are not only walk-around food but talk-about food as well. To have a "Tookie Attack", (definition: strong desire for a Tookie special) is common among high-tech office workers, sailors, housewives and school kids. Everyone has their own special preference and sticks with it. A full order-to-go business takes care of the "Tookie Attack" customers chained to their desks at noon or VCRites at night. Orders are called in and picked up by people from miles around. Nothing else satisfies when a "Tookie Attack" comes on.

THE CRAB HOUSE

Life in the fast high-tech lane of NASA seems like a past dream that never was to Joe Sammon, who traded wing tips, gray flannels and pressure in the "think tank" for the easy laid-back life of thongs, cool cottons and being his own boss. "Being your own boss", the American dream. "Forget 9 to 5, I'm my own boss! Now I have the freedom of around-the-clock worry that never goes away. What a joy, the hours stink but I'm my own boss. Thank goodness for a

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supportive commitment from the little woman and for fathering a bunch of great kids, now adults, who think old Dad can do no wrong."

Coming to NASA from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania by way of the University of New Mexico as a technical writer, it didn't take Joe and Charlotte long to prefer the casual down-home lifestyle of the bay area to the regimentation of a government office. Looking for the right opportunity to come along that would release him from the shackles of 9 to 5, Joe found a little house on Todville that he rebuilt, eventually to become the Crab House — the best darn place to eat crabs in all of Texas. Joe's background in precision work carried over to the handling, preparation and serving of crabs and he has it down to a science. Before the Crab House, he was catching, processing and wholesaling crabs to fish houses and restaurants. After catching, handling and cooking tons of crabs over the years, Joe is definitely a hands-on expert. According to Joe, don't overcook crabs and don't try to cook too many at one time.

At the Crab House, crabs are steamed in large kettles above water boiling over 30,000 BTUs of concentrated heat. As soon as the crabs turn rosy pink, they are done. Crabs must be chilled at once to stop the cooking action.

The casual "front porch" atmosphere you enjoy at the Crab House does not prevail in the kitchen. To make them perfect, the specially blended spices used to season crabs are shipped from an old Baltimore spice company.

The attention to detail and quality control makes crab cooking a state-of-the-art endeavor by Joe Sammon and his family.

MARIO'S FLYING PIZZA AND ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Aromas reminiscent of your mother's kitchen spark a warm feeling of being at home when you walk through the door of Mario's. One can almost taste the delicate blend of old-world spices and herbs just by taking in the smells drifting from the kitchen.

Using the freshest ingredients available, Mario's pizzas have become legendary among the restaurant's hundreds of loyal customers. But, Mario's fare goes beyond pizzas, featuring numerous carefully prepared pasta, chicken and veal entrees.

The popularity of the restaurant's lunch menu draws a hungry crowd from businesses throughout the bay area. Mondays through Fridays, Mario's lunch specials range from a trip to the bountiful salad bar and a small pizza to "dinners-for-lunch" specials. Lunch also features a special "light lunch" for the calorie conscious.

Located at the same 1304 Bayport (Hwy. 146) location for over 13 years, the restaurant has been owned and operated by the Vogt family for the last five years. Truly a family-owned business, Tom and Wilma Vogt along with son Monte purchased the restaurant from another area pizza eatery after Monte had learned the business as an employee. Other members of the family also work in the restaurant and the other five to six employees are considered family.

Quick, friendly service and great food are trademarks the Vogts insist on. In addition to their famous pizza, customer favorites include the delicious lasagna, beef canneloni and the savory chicken ala Mario's, a breaded chicken breast covered with brown gravy and topped with Mozzarella cheese.

Mario's is open seven days a week from 11 a.m. — 11 p.m. except Fridays and Saturdays when hours are extended to 1 a.m.

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A Haunted House

By Jan Brown

I lived in a haunted house. Yes, right here in Seabrook. It's still here. I've been by it a few times and wondered how the ghost is getting along with the newest residents. I got along fine. My husband (at the time) had some problems, but I got along just fine. It's those times I'd like to share with you.

Craig and I moved to the area on the ragged ends of Camille, a very unlady-like hurricane that came ashore in Gulfport, Mississippi, in 1969. We arrived with the clothes on our backs and as many household items as were salvable. Within a month, we found this cute little house in Seabrook across from HL&P and behind what was then Clear Lake Lumber. Our landlord gave us a "good deal". We set up house and everything was going smoothly.

One day, Craig and I were at home after work and he was telling me about some unusual things happening while he was at the house. You see, he worked the day shift and I worked the night shift at the Metro Airport lounge. Some of you may recall that Craig was a writer of poetry. He aspired to have a book of his own. He spent many hours composing at the house. But, one of the strange things he said happened was that he would leave his writing to go to another area of the house, only to return to pencils with the points broken off! And sometimes he would find the sheets of paper he was writing on strewn about.

Well, I didn't believe too much of what he said. Hey, I'm deathly afraid of the dark. Then, one day, I was at home alone washing the dishes. The kitchen faced away from the main part of the house. All of a sudden the hair on the back of my neck stood right up. There was a tickling sensation on the back of my ankles as if someone were dancing their fingers back and forth! I jumped — literally — to one side of the sink and turned around. No one was there. Just the goose bumps on my entire body and my eyes bugging out two inches in front of my face. Several empty rooms were in full view.

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Remember when . . .

It was 1911 when oil fever struck Seabrook. Unfortunately, the Lucy Lee No. 1 didn't bring in a single drop of oil. She did provide water from an artisian well for the next 30 years, however.

In 1920, Houston folks didn't have to worry about the Friday afternoon traffic as they scrambled to escape the heat and stress of city living. They just packed up the family and boarded the train that took them right into Seabrook for the weekend. And on San Jacinto Day there was a special treat. The train was all decked out with red, white and blue streamers from "cow catcher to caboose."

Now, that will make you think twice. Do you do like people in the movies and explore the rest of the house, when for years you have yelled at the girl, "Don't go in there", or do you ignore it and finish the dishes? I finished the dishes. Sideways. I figured whatever it was, was going to get tired of washy, washy, rinsey, rinsey. After too long at the sink, I calmed down enough to ease through the rest of the house. Nothing. I don't know if I was disappointed or relieved, but nothing was there.

When I changed shifts with Craig, I had to tell of my "First Encounter." He said, "See, I told you there was something or someone living in that house." My reply was something to the effect that if there was, either it paid part of the rent or we'd string up the landlord for not telling us the place had extra visitors.

Several days later we ran into Mr. Landlord, Bob Marsh. (Many of you may know him. He still lives in the area.) When confronted with the idea that there was a GHOST living in our house, he said something like, "Well... I didn't think it would make a difference." (Did he really know, or was he just aware that the former tenants left in a hurry?)

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Craig supposedly researched our problem. It seemed a former tenant, Mr. Hartzel Spences, was a writer. Something about the Dead Scrolls stuff. (Wonderful.) A family problem sent him to Connecticut or thereabouts, where upon he met his maker. The story goes that he was fond of the little house in Seabrook and came back in spirit to live everafter. As Craig was a writer too, could that have been the draw to the little house on stilts? (It needed so much repair when we first moved in, I often wondered why we chose it.)

Spence. That's what the ghost was now known by. I was made more aware of his presence by an incident one rainy day. I took Craig to work. Before I could get back home, the monsoons started. I made the comment aloud that I wish I'd left the bottom door unlocked. By using the outside stairs to the main door I would get drenched. When I arrived home, the door to the room downstairs was ajar. The back of my neck bristled. I looked inside, only to find that a trap door in the floor at the top of a stairway was open. A huge box, not yet emptied from the move, had been pushed from atop the trap door so that I would be able to get inside the house without ever getting wet. Now, that's what I call a nice guy! I was ecstatic. I called Craig to tell him of my good fortune. And when we changed shifts, I told him I'd left the trap door open, with the bottom door unlocked so he also wouldn't get wet. The phone call half an hour later is censored, but in essence, I was a very big liar and Craig was a very wet boy!

Then, there was the evening when we had friends join us around 10 p.m. "Go on in and make yourselves at home," we had told them. When we arrived at the house, two sullen people were sitting on the top step having a drink, with no glass or ice. When questioned about why they were enjoying the evening humidity and mosquitoes, we were told in no uncertain terms that the door was locked and how the !%¢&* were they supposed to do as asked. Craig climbed the stairs, turned the doorknob and walked right in.

"Well, I'll be a (blank)," said one of the guests. "I tried that door several times over the past hour and the darn thing was locked."

Guess Spence wasn't expecting company.

Later that evening, I discovered I needed something else for dinner and Cain's Market was still open. I went shopping and made the comment while paying that I lived in the house on stilts by HL&P and we had had some strange experiences lately. The white-haired, elderly lady behind the counter merely said, "You, too?" Wish she'd been more specific. She wouldn't go into any more detail.

I've told you about "feeling" Spence. Let me tell you that I don't know what a ghost is supposed to look like. One day, however, I was by myself. Here came that feeling again. I'd learned that whenever that happened to turn around or simply say, "Spence, I'm not in the mood to play today." He seemed to listen to me and the feeling would go away. But, this day the feeling was quite strong. I finally got up the courage to *go in there* , and when I did... IT was there! A large will-o-the-wisp sort of white ball went flying through the bedroom and down the hall! I ran after it, but by the time I got to the hall, it was gone. Disappeared!

Now, folks, you just thought the hair on the back of my neck had stood on end up to now. Wellllll, I had goose bumps for an hour and was shaking so badly I had trouble dialing the club to tell Craig I had finally made *contact*! After that, I always shut the bathroom door when I bathed. It opened to the hallway and I always wondered if Spence watched when I took a bath. Silly, isn't it? — worrying about a ghost watching. Guess I took the *Ghost and Mrs. Muir* too seriously.

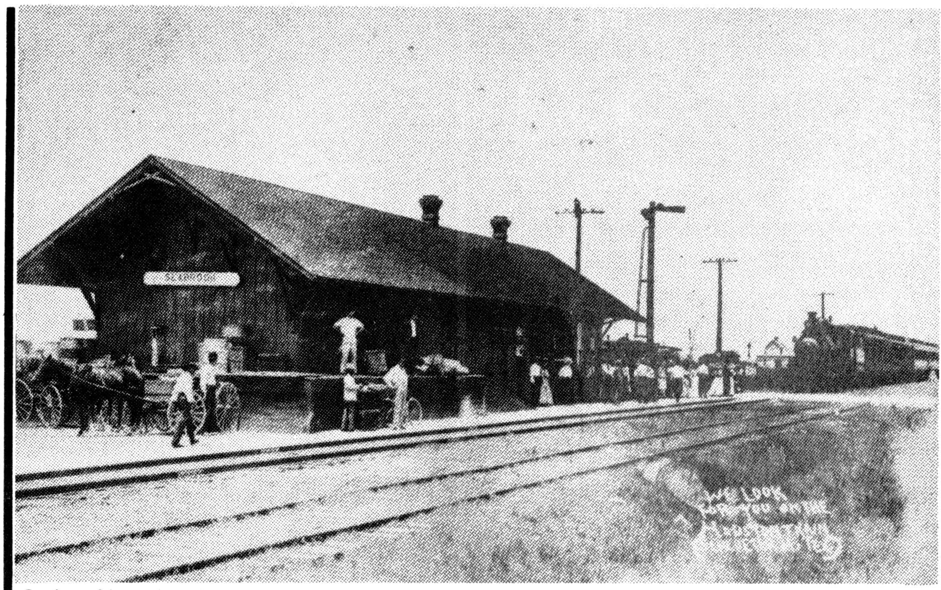
All this time what I got from Craig was that, whenever he wrote in the evenings, he would leave the room only to return to broken pencils. There were times when I got home to find a real work of art on paper. He always said he'd been inspired.

There are two more stories I would like to share with you, so don't leave yet. It was around Halloween time. I had bought a pair of those crazy glasses that, when you put them on and move your head up and down, the eyes open and shut. I know very well — definitely —that when I went to bed the previous night, I had left them on the arm of the sofa. I awoke the next morning to that bristling feeling. I quietly awoke Craig and told him of *the* feeling. (I wasn't going to face this alone!) I sat up. About that time, the white will-o-the-wisp ball appeared and whirled across the front porch, visible through the French doors. I dashed from the bed to follow the ball, only to have it disappear in front of my eyes through the wall to the out-of-doors. I re-entered the house through a second door to the main living room and was stopped short with a gasp. There, on the wall at eye level, was the same pair of comic glasses draped across a plaque on the wall, the eyes blinking at me as I walked by. Believe me, before at least one cup of coffee, this can give a person quite a jump start!

And, at last, Craig saw Spence as I had before.

Time passed and we moved from the house. A few years later I was in another job. During that time, my supervisor lost her grandmother to an illness. Donna came to work days later in a harried, shaken mood. When I asked her what the problem was, she stated she was having nightmares. Her grandmother was prominent, holding her arms out to Donna, or she was seeing the funeral proceedings all

Flash Back



Seabrook's railroad depot was a popular place when the trains arrived carrying visitors and the mail. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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over again. Macabre, huh? We all have dreams.

Don't ask me why I did the following, but I wanted to try an experiment. I asked Donna to excuse me from typing for the next few minutes. As this was on a Friday, I asked her to report to me the following week about any dreams. Please, I have never thought of myself as a medium, but this was the exception of exceptions. I always felt close to Spence.

So, for the next few minutes, I closed my eyes and thought as hard as I could. I "called" Spence and asked him for the following favor: "Go to Donna's grandmother and tell her she is scaring Donna. Donna has accepted the death and the dreams are just too much."

I've never thought as positively as I did that afternoon. A few minutes later, I went back to work. My neck started to bristle. Naturally, I looked up. The heavy, eight-foot solid-wood door in front of me was opening by itself. I can see it today. The "feeling" stayed for about 10 minutes. Then, mysteriously, the door opened and closed again, and the feeling went away.

We went home Friday for a regular weekend. Monday I said nothing and neither did Donna. Tuesday I could stand it no more. I casually asked how the dreams were, if they had recurred. She looked so refreshed. She blinked at me then said, "Friday and Saturday I didn't dream. I was so relieved. I finally got some rest. Then Sunday I had a weird dream. Grandma came to me in the dream. She didn't scare me this time. She spoke to me saying that she was sorry; she hadn't meant to frighten me. She was just trying to make me understand that she was all right and not to worry. She said that she wouldn't bother me any more and not to be scared to die." Needless to say, that raised a few goose bumps on the arms.

I know I said two stories, but if I didn't tell you the most recent, you would really think I'm nuts! In 1986, I told a couple some of the above things. "Look," I told them, "get in the car and we'll drive by the old place and you will at least know where it is even if you don't believe me." We did just that. The house has been remodeled. The outside stairs are gone and the bottom room has been made into living quarters. The porch I saw Spence speed across is now part of the house. And there was a For Sale sign in the yard. We were going slowly and, when we stopped while I surveyed the place and the kids' playthings, one of the residents came out to greet us. I stated I used to live there long ago and how they had made it look so nice. "Say, by the way, the place is haunted, you know," I said.

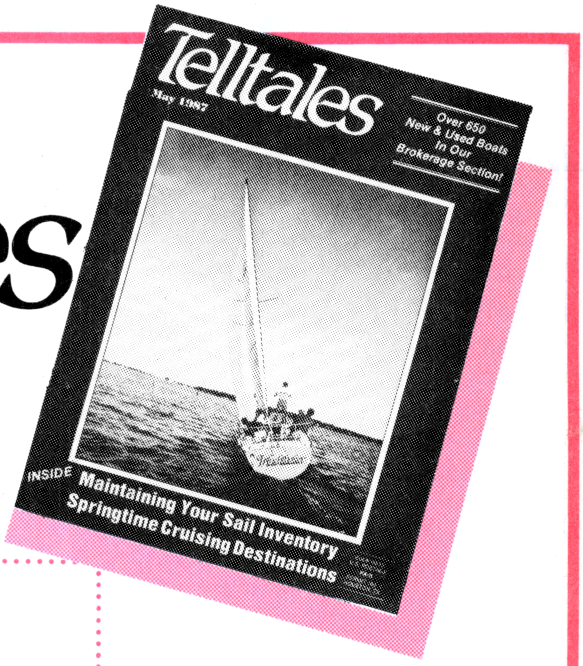
The lady bowed her head and said something to the effect that I must be from a foreign planet, because the house was OK. They were being relocated to Colorado and were trying to sell the house.

I stated that whatever she said couldn't convince me; that there was a ghost living with me when I resided there for two years. He was a friendly creature and I had had some nice experiences.

She seemed to warm up to this. "Well," she said, "you know, my daughter has said several times she has seen this man in the house."

I believe in ghosts. Do you?

Postscript: *I have always told these stories just as you've read. That's the way they happened. There are more, but these are the most memorable. In repeating them from time to time, I find that this is not the only "occupied" house in Seabrook. Ask Kneothia, or the people at the Texas General Store, for starters. Or you may recall the article in the* News Citizen *about Chuck's Castaways...*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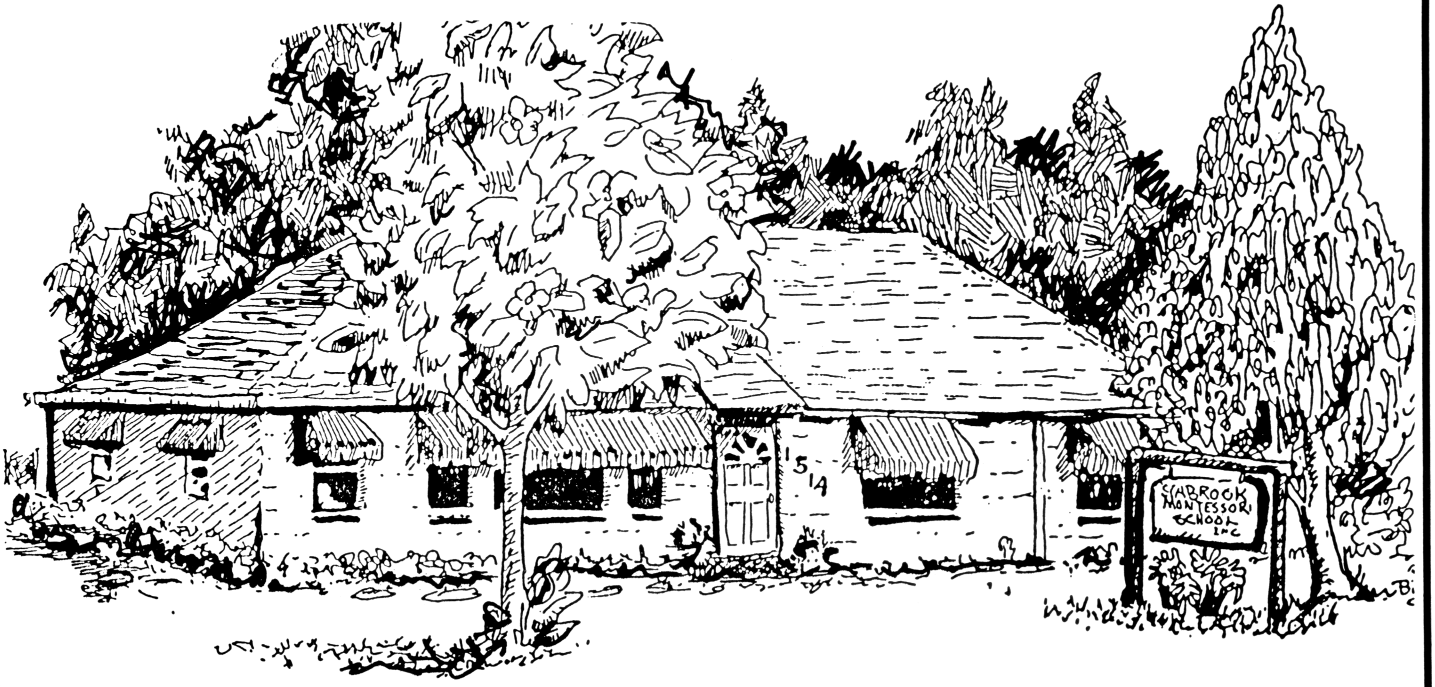
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